POSITION OF USER EDUCATION AT FIVE STATE AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES OF INDIA: A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The current research focuses on the value of user education programs and how they are implemented at some of India's oldest State Agricultural Universities. Because Pantnagar was the first State Agricultural University to be created in 1960, the other universities taken as sample were all founded between 1960 and 1970. Academic libraries must develop support from their educational institutions in order to demonstrate their value. In this sense, they must ensure that scholars make the best use of library and information services. Although earlier research has been done on information seeking behaviour and information literacy abilities at other universities, the current study examined a wide range of features of a functional library, knowledge about handling digital library, studying the information literacy skills of agricultural students at five different agricultural Universities of India and there by designing suitable user education program at regular intervals to enhance the optimal usability of library resources by the users efficiently and effectively.

KEYWORDS: Information skills; State Agriculture University; Information literacy; User education; Database; ICT skills, Users' Orientation.

Original Article

INTRODUCTION

The library is the trilogy of library staff, resources and users. To maintain a healthy library environment and its smooth management, there should be a proper equilibrium between those three aspects. Any inequity or disparity in any of the three factors will prove the very concept of library to be unsuccessful. For the implementation of smooth library services to be imparted, there need to be skillful librarians, well organized library resources, as well as digital technology with 24x7 internet connectivity. To keep pace with the emerging needs of students, library should increase the number of trained staff, appoint experts who can effectively conduct best user education program by monitoring students' needs from time to time. Library should make user education training compulsory for all faculties and students and should provide the users different instructional materials, arrange user awareness programs to enhance the usability of resources to the optimum. A proper user education program can bring a positive and assertive feeling amongst the students towards library use, considering their previous background. Hence, some sort of user education is inevitable to make the users information literate which would ultimately help them to hunt their desired information in the library without any assistance from an intermediary.

NEED FOR 'USER EDUCATION'

During the latter part of the twentieth century, there was a burgeoning of the library as an access point with too

much interference of technology and information networks. In the present era, web-based digital resources have become too common at almost every library. Different tools and methods are being adopted to include technology in the research process. The invention of remote access tools has made the resources available at ease to the users in remote areas i.e. away from the library at the comfort of their homes. Electronic resources and information and communication technology now have made remote access technology a reality for the users. To acquaint about the above technology and make the optimal use of information resources, there is a dire need for user education programme in every library. Besides that, user education not only empowers a user to independently search, identify, and locate a desired piece of information relevant to his/her needs, minimizing his/her dependence on an intermediary, but also ensures the optimal utilization of learning resources of a library.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

As a result of the massive use of digital technology in library practice at a faster rate, traditional Agriculture University libraries in India are finding it difficult to keep up. Modern electronic gadgets in library practice have evolved from an image-building tool to a need since the introduction of digitization. As a result, the current research focuses on the availability of ICT resources in university libraries, the examination of information-seeking behaviour among agricultural science students, and the existing ICT skills and user education of users at India's five oldest State Agricultural Universities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The key objectives of the present study are to study the IT literacy skills, handling digital resources of library clienteles and the user education programme carried out at the five oldest State Agricultural Universities those are established between 1960 to 1970. Among other issues, the present study intends to unearth the following aspects:

- To assess the information seeking behavior of agriculture students and researchers;

- To assess the level of IT literacy skills of the library users of SAU's; and

- To identify strategies for implementation of proper user education program for the library users in SAU's.

METHODOLOGY

A well-structured questionnaire developed to meet the objectives, was delivered to 350 users of the five State Agricultural Universities involved in the survey at a rate of 70 questionnaires per university for the purpose of data collection. Following that, the elicited responses were tabulated and analyzed using Microsoft Excel, t-test and Anova to detect any possible associations between the variables.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Uwakwe, Blessing Solomom, Onyeneke, Cajetan O. & Njoku, Immaculatta Ngozi (2016) conducted a study the motivation of such study was to look at the impact of user education on law students and their library usage skills. This investigation recognized a couple of issues that upset viable client instruction as over populace, absence of framework, insufficient fund and unskilled staff, absence of instructional materials, restricted time allotted to the program, in conducive condition and inadequate space. The study additionally recommends a couple of therapeutic measures to defeat the challenges which makes obstacle in the usage of user instruction program.

Liu, Q., et al., (2016) in his study portrays students' observation towards library client education. The author distributed 104 questionnaires with structured questions put to students pursuing their higher education under Fudan University and the National Taiwan Normal University. This study depicts distinctive user education techniques and diverse advertising systems to advance them as a motivating force. Besides, this study unfolds the confinements of clients for not going to library instruction program. The study also proposes a couple of approaches to support the user education program to increase attendance.

Katuu, S. (2015). The motivation behind this study was to inspect user studies and as user instructions as public services offered by archival institutions. The paper discussed the outcomes of investigated articles from the late 1970s till the date to light up discussions on comprehension of user studies and user instructions. The paper unmasks the various ways utilized in user education with a focus on information accumulation and made a critical evaluation of users need. The study additionally sketched out the two related ideal models of organizing user instruction programs, featured the focuses at which they vary and the fruitful outcomes coming out of their comparative analysis.

MuthumarI, P. and Chinnasamy, K. (2014) in their work have asserted that in the present era, library clienteles get their required information from the web. The significant philosophy of this paper is to examine the basics of how to lead client direction and clients need and illuminate the new resources. Usually, Librarians may follow various instructions and procedures in the form of orientation to lead client direction. The direction in the scholastic library is significant and it supports to make the mindfulness among the library clients about the library assets.

Mishra, Monisha and Mahapatra, R.K (2013). The authors portrayed the importance, need and extent of user instructions. The paper additionally illuminated the online user training and how it is not the same as conventional library guidance. The Library is a service organization and the librarians serve to the customer base, making them mindful about their resources, offer and why they require user support. Library is a trinity of Staff, Resources and Users. So to accomplish client fulfillment, the assets of the library must be sufficiently made visible with the goal that the user can utilize the assets ideally, for which the "User Education" should be considered in libraries. On the highest point of that, the paper additionally depicted the job of Librarians in facilitating user instruction.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The process of imparting meaning to the processed and analysed data is known as data interpretation. It allows us to draw educated and meaningful conclusions, implications, infer the significance between the relationships of variables and explain data patterns.

Table 1: Basic IT Literacy

Name of the Ag. University	Knowledge in Correct use of Boolean Operators & Search Indexes within the Catalogue				Knowledge to Identify the Controlled Vocabulary in a Database			
	NK	BK	ML	PK	NK	BK	ML	PK
UAS, BANGALORE	8	20	4	0	0	24	8	0
ASSAM AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY	0	4	16	8	0	8	12	8
GBPUAT, PANTNAGAR	4	12	4	20	4	8	8	20
JNKVV	8	16	0	4	0	24	0	4
OUAT	12	20	28	8	8	32	16	12

Table-1 depicts the basic information literacy skills of the users. The resultant data show that, a majority of 36.73% of users have the basic knowledge of Boolean operators & search indexes within the catalogue, whereas 16.32% of users have no knowledge about the same. Similarly, a larger chunk of users' population 49% has the knowledge to identify the controlled vocabulary in a database, while a meagre percentage 6.12% of user population absolutely have no knowledge about the same.

Table 2: Knowledge about Handling Digital Library

Name of the Ag. University	Know. to use OPAC & web OPAC				Know. on Using Social Networking Sites			
	NK	BK	ML	PK	NK	BK	ML	PK
UAS, BANGALORE	12	5	10	5	10	12	10	0
ASSAM AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY	0	4	12	12	0	0	12	16
GBPUA&T, PANTNAGAR	8	8	4	20	0	28	8	4
JNKVV	8	16	4	0	0	14	8	6
OUAT	16	20	20	12	8	24	4	32

Table -2 shows the response of users regarding knowledge about using digital library like usage of OPAC & web OPAC. The above graph shows that, a majority of 27.04% of user population have the basic knowledge about using OPAC and web OPAC; followed by majority of 39.8% users having basic knowledge on using different social networking sites for myriad purposes. A negligible size of user population constituting only 9.18% have no knowledge of using social networking sites which is not so significant.

Table 3: Knowledge about using e-Resources

Name of the Ag. University	Know to use any Database Online				Know. To distinguish a Catalogue from Bibliographic Database			
	NK	BK	ML	PK	NK	BK	ML	PK
UAS, BANGALORE	0	24	8	0	4	24	4	0
ASSAM AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY	0	12	8	8	0	4	16	8
GBPUA&T, PANTNAGAR	8	8	16	8	8	8	16	8
JNKVV	0	28	0	0	12	12	4	0
OUAT	4	44	4	16	16	34	6	12

Table -3 shows that, a majority of 59.18% of user population have the basic knowledge to use any database online whereas 6.12% of the total users, however, have no knowledge to use any online database. Regarding knowledge to distinguish a catalogue from bibliographic database, only 41.83% have basic knowledge whereas 14.28% of users have the perfect knowledge. This requires a solid training or user awareness to use those databases and get optimal benefit from the same.

Table 4: Frequency of User Education

Name of the Ag. University	Does your Lib. Provide user Education		If yes, how Frequently		
	Yes	No	Once in a Week	once in a Month	Once in a Year
UAS, BANGALORE	24	8	4	16	12
ASSAM AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY	28	0	20	4	4
GBPUA&T, PANTNAGAR	24	16	10	14	16
JNKVV	16	12	6	12	10
OUAT	64	4	36	12	20

The resultant responses as reflected in Table-4 above shows the consent of the users about receiving user education programme by the concerned University. A majority of the user population (79.59%) have agreed that they get user education from their University. Similarly, regarding the frequency of getting the user education also have different views. Notably, 38.77% of users have shown their interest to receive user education on a weekly basis which is quite significant.

Analysis: Table 4.1 (T - Test)

Difference Scores Calculations

Treatment 1

N1: 5
df1 = N - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4
M1: 31.2
SS1: 1420.8
s21 = SS1/(N - 1) = 1420.8/(5-1) = 355.2

Treatment 2

N2: 5
df2 = N - 1 = 5 - 1 = 4
M2: 8
SS2: 160
s22 = SS2/(N - 1) = 160/(5-1) = 40
T-value Calculation

s2p = ((df1/(df1 + df2)) * s21) + ((df2/(df2 + df2)) * s22) = ((4/8) * 355.2) + ((4/8) * 40) = 197.6
s2M1 = s2p/N1 = 197.6/5 = 39.52
s2M2 = s2p/N2 = 197.6/5 = 39.52

t = (M1 - M2)/√(s2M1 + s2M2) = 23.2/√79.04 = 2.61

The T-test done at table 4.1 analysed the t-value is 2.60954. The p-value is .015576. The result is significant at p < .05.

Table 5: Response on Method of Receiving/Imparting User Education

Methods Used	Name of the University				
	UAS, BANGALORE	ASSAM AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY	GBPVA & T, PANTNAGAR	JNKVV	OUAT
Lecture method	12	20	16	12	48
Advertising/publicity	8	8	4	8	4
Workshop	4	0	0	16	20
Brochures	4	8	8	4	0
Newsletters	0	8	8	4	4
Demonstration method	4	4	12	12	16
Book exhibition	4	4	12	16	52
Display of new arrivals	8	2	5	8	40
Through mass media	4	12	4	4	0
Through guide tours	4	4	0	4	0
Seminars	8	0	0	12	4
Audio tapes and cassettes	0	0	0	0	4

In regard to method/mode of receiving user education, the resultant responses as reflected in Table-5 shows that, 55.1% of the user population prefer the lecture method; followed by 44.9% prefer book exhibition for the orientation purpose. Only very negligible chunks of user population 2.04% prefer to conduct the orientation programs through some of the conventional methods like, audio tapes and cassettes.

Analysis: Table 5.1 - Anova

Summary of Data						
	Treatments					
	1	2	3	4	5	Total
N	12	12	12	12	12	60
$\sum X$	60	70	69	100	192	491
Mean	5	5.8333	5.75	8.3333	16	8.183
$\sum X2$	432	788	729	1136	7328	10413
Std.Dev.	3.4641	5.875	5.4959	5.2455	19.67	10.411

Result Details				
Source	SS	df	MS	
Between-treatments	992.4	4	248.1	F = 2.52574
Within-treatments	5402.583	55	98.2288	
Total	**6394.983**	**59**		

Here is an attempt to find any relation among the method/mode of receiving user education in Table 5.1. The author used the Anova application (statistical tool) and the result identifies that the f-ratio value is 2.52574. The p-value is .051. The result is not significant at $p < .05$

CONCLUSIONS

User education is no doubt an essential part of an academic library's service, as it guides both students and faculties to become vigilant and more efficient library users, and thereby allowing them to make the best and optimal use of library's learning resources available to them. Analysis of the resultant data pertaining to their skill in IT literacy, skills like

handling of online databases, distinguishing between catalogue from bibliographic database, identifying the citation to a journal article, using OPAC etc. have proved that, the users of different agricultural universities have only the basic knowledge. By imparting proper user education on effective usage of various learning resources at regular intervals, only can prove more helpful to the users in enhancing their usage skill as well as efficiency. At the same time, the resources of the library can also be used to an optimal level.

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